



DISPATCH

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Iraqi Troops Detain Suspected IED Makers

**By Staff Sgt. Duane M. Brown
22nd MPAD**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE COBRA, SABIYAH, Iraq – Three Iraqi men were detained Feb. 21 during a raid on homes of suspected improvised explosive device makers in Sabiyah, Iraq.

Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, 3rd Squadron, 278th Regimental Combat Team, lead the way by coordinating a night mission involving Iraqi Armed Forces, U.S. ground troops, helicopters and M2 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles.

"We entered the homes and grabbed the subjects right off the bat," said 1st Lt. Gregory W. Smith, platoon leader and native of Nashville, Tenn. "After detaining the individuals, we began questioning them and conducted simultaneous searches of their homes."

Detainees were questioned for intelligence pertaining to the network of anti-Coalition resistance in Sabiyah. Homes were also searched

for IED building material and any documentation that could lead to other members of the IED network.

"Mainly we just got a few more IED makers off the streets," Smith said. "These guys, both U.S. and IAF Soldiers, did a wonderful job."

A lot of the reason for the 278th success goes all the way back to the states, long before the mission briefing and rehearsals, said Sgt. Leo Shinkle, a unit gunner.

"After a six month train-up at Camp Shelby, Miss., I think we came to Iraq ready to go," said the native of Gallatin, Tenn.

By conducting these types of

missions, offenders in Sabiyah are getting a clear message.

"Together with the IAF, we are letting offenders know they are not beyond our reach. "If they

come out and start setting up IEDs, we'll come after them even if it means going to their homes to get them," Shinkle said.



Through a night-vision lens, Iraqi Armed Forces soldiers search a detainee's home as a 278th Regimental Combat Team Soldiers oversees the effort.

A Friendly Patrol - Civil Affairs Polls Businessmen

**By Staff Sgt. Raymond Drumsta
42nd Infantry Division**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DANGER, Tikrit, Iraq - Like all forays outside the wire here, the Soldiers had their game faces on, and rolled out of the gate with loaded weapons, body armor, in armored humvees.

But this patrol had a friendly face, because it was from the 411th Civil Affairs Battalion. Supporting the commander in his relationship with the populace is civil affairs' main mission, according to Battalion Commander Lt. Col. Edwin Miranda, of Miami, Fla.

"You want to give the impression that you're there to help," he said.

"You want to build relationships."

The battalion's civil affairs Soldiers are doing that - and more - in Task Force Liberty's area of operations.

On the recent patrol here, Soldiers of the battalion's Headquarters and Headquarters Company hit the streets to talk to Iraqi businessmen, assess the effects of Iraq's recent elections on business and ask about establishing a chamber of commerce, said civil affairs team chief Staff Sgt. John Imperato, of Rhinebeck, N.Y.

"The goal was to get the feel of the business community, to see how they feel about a chamber of commerce, and if they would participate in it," added Sgt. Michael Rothermel, civil

affairs team sergeant, of Boyertown, Pa.

Self-reliance is the ultimate goal, Miranda said.

"The Iraqis need to get back on their feet, and get back to work," he said. "They need to take vested interest in their own affairs," he said.

Imperato is a Bedford, N.Y., police officer and former New York Army National Guard Soldier. During the patrol, Imperato moved from business to business like a cop walking his beat, chatting easily, through an interpreter, to Tikrit business owners.

"I can read people well. I'm used to dealing with people on foot patrol,"

Imperato said, referring to his police experience. "It's similar. You still have to be on your guard."

Finding the mean between security and sociability is difficult, Miranda said.

"They have to find a balance between force protection and conducting civil-military operations," Miranda emphasized. He stressed that civil affairs Soldiers can protect themselves just like other Soldiers, while treating civilians respectfully - something all Soldiers should do.

"The average soldier must fully understand the rules of engagement," he said. "He must understand in

(continued on next page)

A Day at the Races: Tennessee Soldiers Enjoy NASCAR...In Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Duane M. Brown, 22nd MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE COBRA, SABIYAH, Iraq - The 3rd Squadron, 278th Regimental Combat Team's chain-of-command went the extra mile for their Soldiers by featuring a NASCAR Night during the Daytona 500, Feb.20.

With the help of Army food service specialists, the unit's first sergeants put their best foot forward to bring that NASCAR feeling to Forward Operating Base Cobra, SABIYAH, Iraq.

"Being that a lot of my guys from Tennessee are big NASCAR fans, we thought it would be good to find some way they all could relax and enjoy it," said Command Sgt. Maj. James B. Kyle, 3-278 RCT sergeant major. "Every month we try and

have some kind of event."

Kyle had both the dining facility and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center set up so Soldiers could enjoy the race and forget about being away from home, even if just for a little while.

Besides setting up televisions in the dining and reserving the MWR facility for the event, the first sergeants and cooks spent over two hours preparing food for the occasion and took the time to serve it up as well.

"We went all out for the guys, everybody enjoys sporting events but there is nothing like good food to go with them," said Pvt. Justin T. Finley, food service specialist and native of Cleveland, Tenn. "The

menu has everything a sporting man needs."

Fried chicken, wings, pizza, hot pockets, cheese sticks, soft drinks and deserts were being served as Soldiers kicked back and cheered their race day favorites.

These types of activities raise morale and give Soldiers a better feeling when they go outside the wire, Kyle added. We also do fun things like Friday Night Fights at the first of every month (the fights are refereed by a qualified boxing coach). This is something that began back when we mobilized at Camp Shelby, Miss. and the guys absolutely love it.

During the elections, some soldiers worked as many as 36 to 48 hours

straight, so events like these help them recharge their batteries.

"When soldiers get tired, there aren't many smiling faces around the FOB," Kyle said. "I feel that when possible, the better rested and relaxed off-duty the Soldiers are, they can do a better job of winning the hearts and minds of this community we operate in."

While on duty members of the squadron work with local leaders and provide the community with school supplies, clothes and toys.

"I feel that we came in here with the right attitude. Our Soldiers are doing a really good job, making Tennessee, Wisconsin, Texas and the U.S.A. proud!" said Kyle.

A Friendly Patrol (cont. from page one)

a split second who the enemy is, and who the civilians are. The average Soldier should remember that, like Civil Affairs Soldiers, they are ambassadors. While they are expected to defend themselves, they should treat Iraqis with dignity and respect. It's not easy. In this environment, anyone can come out from the crowd and kill you."

That's why Imperato, Rothermel, an interpreter and Imperato's Iraqi counterpart walked the streets surrounded by a moving perimeter of 360-degree security. The perimeter was formed by American and Iraqi soldiers, who also stood guard at each business the team stopped at.

"We had a good perimeter outside, so I could relax and talk to people," Imperato said. Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment helped provide security on the patrol.

There was no negative feedback from the businessmen they spoke with, he added.

"They're all excited about starting a chamber of commerce," Imperato said. "They felt if all businesses met, they could pool their resources to improve the economy."

The response was great, Rothermel said.

"They're looking forward to having a chamber of commerce," he said. "One thing we're giving them, which they never had before, is a voice. Now they can discuss how they'll collaborate, and how they'll pool their resources."

The next step, Rothermel said, will be for Iraqis to pick chamber

of commerce representatives to communicate their issues.

"You can only meet so many needs," Rothermel said. "You want to help everyone, but you can only help some of them."

"You do what you can. You can't let that burden weigh you down."

Once they were approached by an Iraqi family whose home was destroyed by a mortar round, Rothermel recalled. They were seeking shelter - something the civil affairs Soldiers couldn't provide. What they did supply, however, was food and hygiene

items from the stock they always have handy, and information on how to get in touch with an Iraqi government agency that could help.

"Sometimes we can only point people in the right direction," he said. "That helps them more than we could help them on our own."

"We're structuring a government," Imperato said. "If we can get the smaller government organizations running smoothly, and the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army up to speed, things will be great."

The unit is also training an Iraqi



Staff Sgt. John Imperato (center) speaks with an Iraqi businessman (right) through an interpreter (left), during a recent patrol in Tikrit.

force to take over the civil affairs mission, Imperato said.

"They do well. They go out once a week by themselves," Imperato said.

Based in Danbury, Conn., the unit is coordinating \$8 million of projects in Task Force Liberty's area of operations, said Capt. Tammie Perreault, battalion operations officer. These include minor school renovations, urban clean-up by local labor, the preservation of Iraqi historic sites, and improvement of Iraqi governance facilities.

The Civil Affairs Soldiers helped

coordinate elections with local officials, and recently, the battalion's public health team conducted a health assessment in Samarra, and provided Iraqi health professionals with new medical equipment, sanitation support and medical reference material.

"It's rewarding when you see needs and issues being resolved and taken care of," Miranda said.

Rothermel said he "absolutely loves" civil affairs work.

"Having a positive effect on people's lives here, like we do, is very rewarding," he said.